



# *COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*

## *Office of the Governor*

Robert F. McDonnell  
Governor

May 6, 2011

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

**Subject: BRAC 133 - Mark Center Transportation Crisis**

Dear Secretary Gates:

Thank you for your service to our country and all you do for national defense. As you know from our previous meetings and correspondence, we are very honored here in Virginia to be the home of the Department of Defense (DoD) and many great military installations. However, from time to time, there are important logistical issues that the DoD and Virginia must address together.

Recently, I have reviewed the United States Department of Defense Inspector General's (IG) report dated April 20, 2011 entitled "Assessment of BRAC 133 Final Environmental Assessment of July 2008 and Transportation Management Plan of July 2010." Based upon this review, the report confirms many of the issues formally identified by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) during the BRAC 133 Environmental Assessment (EA) process in 2007 and 2008.

Specifically, VDOT identified, and the report confirmed, the need for:

- Expanded traffic studies to determine impacts on surrounding local and regional roadways;
- Convenient access to Metrorail and/or Virginia Railway Express stations for the Army to achieve its goal of reducing site generated traffic by 40%; and
- A public hearing on the EA to solicit public input.

Unfortunately, the Army did not follow VDOT's recommendations, and the City of Alexandria did not believe additional traffic studies were necessary as part of the EA process.

Since the selection of the Mark Center site in 2008, the Commonwealth has worked with Fort Belvoir and the City of Alexandria to find solutions to the impending traffic challenges. VDOT has performed major access studies and has recommended a

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package of short term transportation improvements and an HOV/Transit ramp from I-395 to Seminary Road. As a result, I included funding for such a ramp (\$80 million) in the recently approved state transportation funding package.

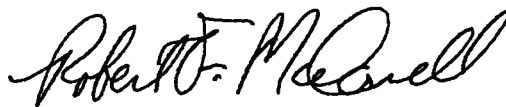
The Commonwealth believes a combination of the improvements cited above and strict implementation and adherence to the Army's Transportation Demand Management Program will resolve many of the impending traffic issues at Mark Center. However, since these improvements are several years away from full implementation, the Commonwealth recommends that the DoD delay full employee relocations to the Mark Center until the short term and HOV/Transit ramp projects are operational. If this recommendation is adopted, we further suggest employee relocations should be coordinated with the Commonwealth, phased in, and continually monitored to determine the maximum number of employees the transportation systems can accommodate.

Given that the Commonwealth had previously alerted the DoD of its concerns on the Mark Center site, we also ask that the I-395/Seminary Road HOV/Transit ramp qualify for funding through the Defense Access Road Program. If approved, the Commonwealth would at a future date request reimbursement of all funds used to design and construct the ramp.

These recommendations are made in the spirit of cooperation. Working together, we can find a mutually beneficial solution to the challenges facing us. I continue to believe the Commonwealth is the best and most strategically located state in the country for DoD facilities, including Washington Headquarter Services.

Thank you for your consideration, and I will have Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton promptly follow up with your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert F. McDonnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "McDonnell" clearly distinguishable.

Robert F. McDonnell

RFM/sc

cc: Virginia Congressional Delegation  
The Honorable John McHugh, Secretary of the Army  
The Honorable Martin L. Kent, Virginia Chief of Staff  
The Honorable Sean T. Connaughton, Virginia Secretary of Transportation  
The Honorable Terrie Suit, Virginia Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland  
Security  
The Honorable William D. Euille, Mayor, City of Alexandria  
The Honorable Sharon Bulova, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors